

141. "The Montagu Volcano"

"The Montagu Volcano" has a name

by Rudi Allmayer

The View



Coincidental Beginning

A view of a mountain from Montagu South. Many a time over the years I have sat on my stoep and thought about how similar the mountain in the pictures looks to a volcano. I have even tried to convince (tongue in cheek) my grandchildren that the mountain is in fact a real volcano which has caused many a

debate. Prior to this article I had no idea that the mountain had a name.

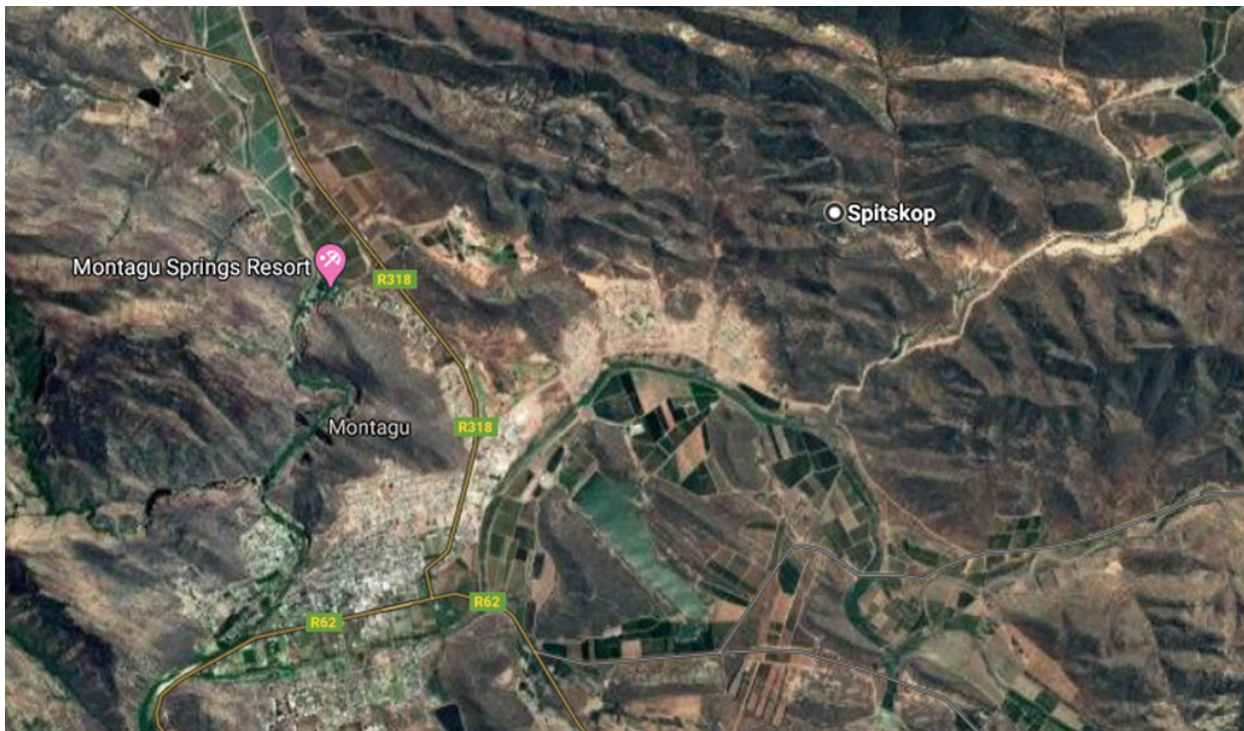
The story unfolds

Irma Jordaan our volunteer archivist at the Montagu museum contacted me and stated that she had unearthed an old manuscript in the museum entitled Onderwys in Montagu tot 1914(Education in Montagu up and till 1914) by J.A. Theron. The document can be viewed by using the information at the end of this story. While reading the document I came across a reference to a farm school situated at a place called Spitskop.

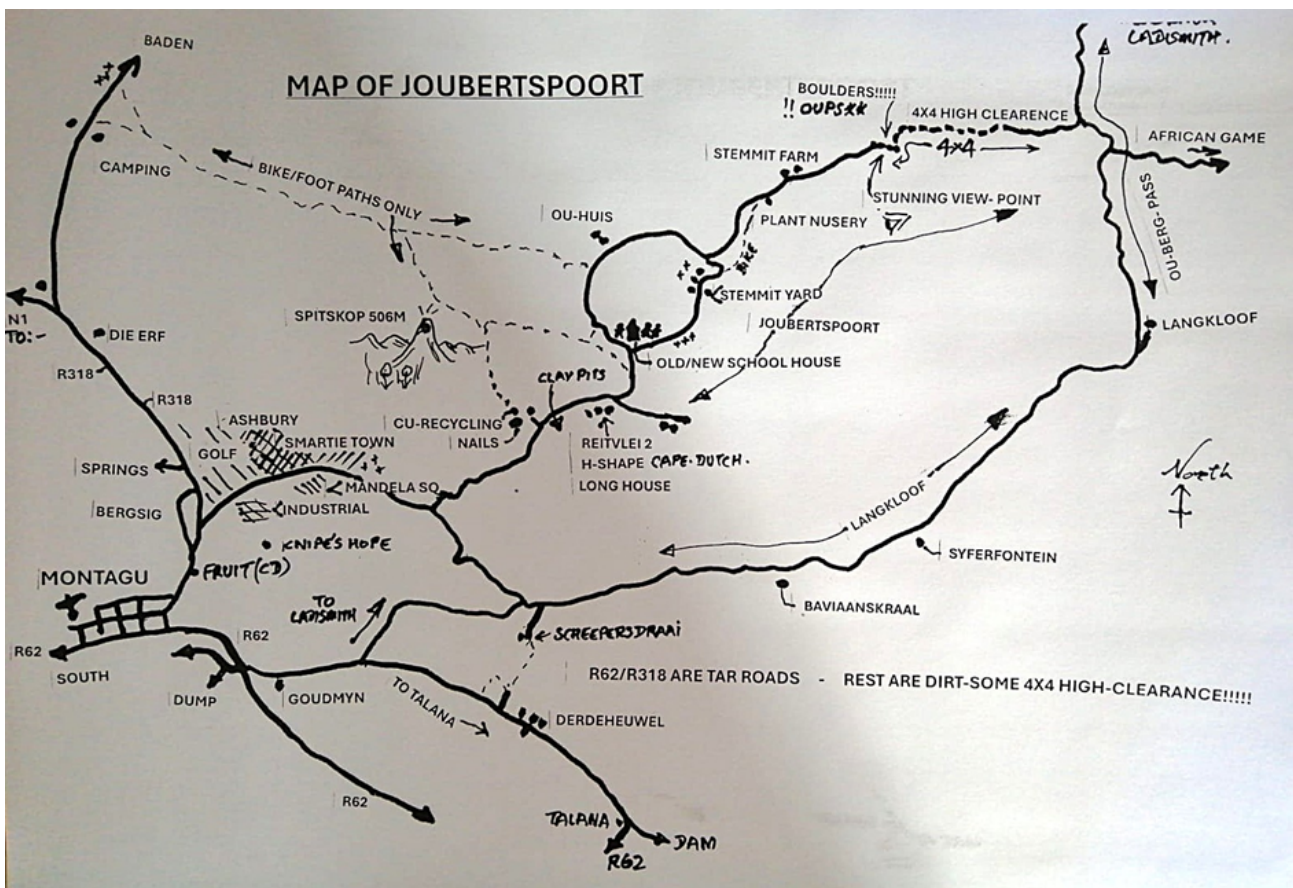
(a) Spitskop en Baden.

Reeds in 1860 het dr. Hofmeyr probeer om 'n sendingskool
op Concordia te stig. Hy kon egter nie 'n geskikte
Kleurling-onderwyser.....

I had never heard about a place called Spitskop in the Montagu district. In the manuscript which was in fact a thesis, Spitskop was associated with Baden which is a well-known area in the Montagu district so I had an idea where Spitskop was situated. Google satellite was consulted with the following result.



Next step was to consult with Montagu Stories resident map expert (He prefers to remain anonymous and shall be called Mike the Mapman). In no time Mike had drawn us a map of how to get to Spitskop.



A Mike the Mapman creation

We then departed on our journey of discovery along Muskadel Street past Ashbury to Rietvlei 2 which is the area where Mike had plotted Spitskop. The first part of our journey ended with a stop on the Rietvlei 2 road with the volcano look alike mountain on our left which **now confirmed our suspicions that the volcano look alike was indeed Spitskop.**



The mountain from the Rietvlei 2 road

The next question being well where is the Spitskop school? Nothing in the immediate vicinity of the mountain could be found that resembled an old school building. We decided to press on along the Reitvlei 2 road and stopped at the first farm on the right hand side of the road which we believe is called Reitvlei 2.



The farm Reitvlei 2 on the right hand side of the road

The first person we came across on the farm was a man busy welding. He confirmed he was a local born and breed and the volcano look alike mountain was indeed Spitskop. He could not however help us with the where abouts of the old school. While talking to him the owner of the farm Reitvlei 2 joined us and could immediately answer our question about the schools where abouts. "Just continue further along the Reitvlei 2 road and you will come to a farm school. The old school has been demolished and a new school built in its place on the same site". The owner remembered the old school as her husbands' family has been farming in the area for 7 generations and members of the family had gone to the old farm school.



The school in 2025

So a chance finding of an old document in the Montagu museum

and a view from a stoep has lead to the name of a mountain being unearthed as well as the whereabouts of another farm school being found. The name Spitskop can be translated in a number of ways but once again our forefathers chose wisely based on what they physically saw.

The origins of the word Spits and kop

spits, n. point head; peak, summit, spire, pinnacle; van, forefront; **aan die** –, at the head; **op die** – drywe, bring to a head.
spits, (–, -e), a. pointed, sharp.
spits, (ge–), point; **die ore** –, prick up one's ears.
spitsbaard, pointed beard.
spitsboog, pointed (Gothic) arch, ogive.
spitsboor, common bit, pointed drill.
spitsbroe(de)r, comrade (in arms).
spitskonferensie, summit conference.
spitsmuis, shrew(-mouse).
spitsroei: – loop, run the gauntlet.
spitsvondig, (-e), subtle, ingenious, far-fetched, quibbling.
spitsvondigheid, subtleness, ingeniousness, quibble, subtle distinction.

kop, (-pe), n. head; hill, kopje; summit; cob (of maize); crest (of wave); hand, soul (on board); sy – in 'n bynes steek, bring a hornet's nest about one's ears; geen – of stert van iets uitmaak nie, make neither head nor tail of a thing; sy – is op hol, his head is turned; sy – verloor, lose one's head; sy – bymekaar hou, keep one's head; die – laat hang, lose courage; sy – stamp (stoot), run one's head against a stone wall; sy eie – volg, go one's own way; iemand se – was, give someone a bit of your mind; – tussen die bene steek, buck; – intrek, draw in one's horns; – uittrek, back out (of something); die – bo water hou, keep one's head above water; met iemand – in een mus wees,

Link to Onderwys in Montagu tot 1914(Education in Montagu up and till 1914) by J.A. Theron is via the link that follows.

Access the story and the link is to be found at the end of the story

[24.Education in Montagu](#)
